

Alison Arnold Writes...

The big orange buses have started to roll up and down the roads again. Goldenrod fringes the roadsides and the maples have begun to show touches of red and gold. Another school year has started.

Public education in Duxbury began in 1642, 5 years after it became a separate town. Elder Brewster, a graduate of Cambridge University, England, stressed the importance of education and students were fitted for Harvard College, which had recently been founded.

Many of Duxbury's early teachers came from Harvard. They were poorly paid and the school buildings were primitive. They were very difficult to heat in winter. Boys were appointed to keep the fires burning in the wood-burning stoves.

Often, drifting snow made the roads impassable and the schools were closed. District schools were provided in 1787 and there were 12 of these schools in 1869.

Built in 1843, Partridge Academy served the town for 80 years, but was destroyed by fire in 1933. The Duxbury town offices are now on the site.

There were 390 pupils in the Duxbury schools in 1880. There are nearly that number of graduates in the high school nowadays.

Women weren't employed for nearly 200 years. One of the most beloved women teachers was Miss Hannah Davis Symmes. Born in Duxbury in 1867, she acquired her education in the Duxbury schools. After she was graduated from Partridge Academy she was given charge of the district school in Ashdod and in 1892 she was made assistant principal of Partridge Academy, a post she held until her death in 1903.

In 1925 the town appropriated \$130,000 for the purchase of a site on Alden Street and construction of a new high school there. The graduation ceremony of the class of 1927 was held there June 14, 1927. This building on the hill now houses part of the elementary school.

Duxbury now has a school campus comparable to that of many colleges. The elementary and intermediate schools border a playing field and nearby are the public library and a swimming pool. Across the street is the very modern Eben Howes Ellison High School with its spacious playing fields sprawling in back. Out on Chandler Street is another very modern elementary school.

In the latter half of the 19th century there were several private schools in Duxbury. One of the best known was conducted by Miss Mary A. Rice. She later became Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, wife of the pastor of the Unitarian Church, and with Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone, she pioneered in the cause of Women's Suffrage.

Other small private schools included those of the Rev. John Allyn and Miss Mercy Delano, and the Alden School for Girls, presided over by Miss Helen Nevers and Miss Mary Jenkins.

Now there are nursery schools and kindergartens, and in 1982 children go to school at 3 years of age. Some pupils go to private schools when they reach high school age, but many continue until they graduate.

I have had grandchildren go on to college from Duxbury. The colleges have included Harvard, Boston College, Colorado University and the University of Southern California at Los Angeles.

In spite of the scorn of *Boston Magazine*, 74% of Duxbury graduates go to college, often to Ivy League institutions, including Harvard, just as they did back in the days when it was founded.